

Designing Your Landscape

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I. Introduction

Personalized landscape defines your home – Creative statement about you
Careful planning, design, installation and care create attractive, functional, landscape
Adds usable living space – different types of spaces
Enhances property values – Good design and maintenance appreciate as they grow

II. Analyze Your Site

a. Soils

Utah soils are naturally alkaline – ancient lake bed
Most new homes have top soil removed or buried and need improvement
What's your soil type – Clay? Silt? Sand? - Soil test USU Extension
Amend soil with organic matter

b. Climate

Utah's climate is a high mountain desert
What's your climate zone – high mountain valley – lower desert elevation?
Hardiness zone - <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html>
Consult local USU Extension offices
Sunset Western Garden Book

c. Orientation of Home

New home?
Minor changes in design can make substantial difference in comfort
Existing home?
Analyze need for shade –
Proper trees can affect summer temp by 20 degrees
Consider winter sun – Solar radiation & tree placement

d. Topography

Natural streams, rocks and slopes influence design
Disadvantage or Hidden Advantage?

- III. Make a Plot Map
 - a. Simple first step – Graph paper and pencil first step in developing ideas
 - b. Draw in accurate property boundaries
 - c. Clearly draw in your home – include windows, driveways, doors, etc.
 - d. Add in contours – drainage?
 - e. Note location of sun and shade areas

- IV. Designing Functional Rooms
 - a. Public area - Most visible areas
 - b. Service areas-
 - c. Living area
 - Consider needs of entire family before finalizing design
 - Long range planning – sandbox obsolescence

- V. Basic Landscape Principles
 - a. Proportion
 - b. Balance
 - c. Variety
 - d. Unity

- VI. Emphasis –
 - a. Use variety to place emphasis where desired

- VII. Foundation Plantings
 - a. Solve architectural problems
 - b. Control plant height genetically not by pruning
 - c. Common mistakes

- VIII. Choosing Your Design - what do you like?
 - a. Create a scrapbook of pictures as you travel
 - b. Visit local public gardens
 - c. Examine professionally maintained landscapes
 - d. Local library – good source of books with photos

- IX. Landscape Design
 - a. Styles
 - i. European
 - ii. Oriental
 - iii. Wild or Woodland
 - iv. Cottage or English style
 - v. Spanish / Mediterranean
 - vi. Contemporary

- b. Help
 - i. Landscape Architects
 - ii. Landscape Contractors
 - iii. Nurseries or Garden Centers
 - iv. Landscape Designers

X. Maintenance

- a. Lawns
- b. Ground Covers
- c. Flowers
- d. Woody Plants
- e. Weed Control
- f. Tools and Equipment

XI. Right Tree – Right Place –

- a. Shape of tree
- b. Spreading habit of tree
- c. Mature height of tree
- d. Utility rights of way
- e. Relate architecture to plantings

Work Sheets

Minimizing Maintenance

Plan Your Landscape

1. Put water outlets and properly grounded electrical power on all sides of the house.
2. Place the driveway and garage near the kitchen door and place walks so they are direct and convenient.

Lawns

1. Keep lawns open, free from flowers, trees, shrubs and other obstacles.
2. Avoid angles and sharp curves on edges
3. Construct a mowing strip of cinder block, concrete or brick, next to buildings and under fences where lawn is present
4. Keep mowing strips, walks, & driveways, one inch higher than lawn to eliminate hand edging. Drop the lawn in areas where it is above the sidewalk and drives.
5. Use a power edging tool that can be operated while standing.
6. Water only as needed – NOT DAILY. Check sprinkling system to measure water is applied uniformly.
7. Aerate slopes and compacted lawn areas for better penetration.
8. Clean sprinkler heads and flush sprinkling lines each spring.
9. Mow Kentucky Bluegrass regularly at 2 ½ to 3 inch height. Do not allow grass to get over 4 inches high. Don't bag clippings.
10. Apply fertilizer as needed

Ground Covers

1. Use ground covers on steep slopes and other difficult to mow areas – also in shade areas.
2. Replace flower borders with ground cover for reduced maintenance.

Flowers

1. Select and use disease-free flowers requiring minimum care.
2. Keep flower beds small and borders narrow for minimum maintenance.
3. Plant perennials.

Woody Plants

1. Use low growing dwarf shrubs and small trees to reduce pruning. Space plants with growing room.
2. Avoid clipped hedges
3. Use well-adapted, healthy, low-care plants.
4. Avoid placing fruit and nut trees over lawns, drives, walks or the terrace.
5. Plant the best tree that will grow in that spot.
6. Avoid shallow rooted trees that sucker and sprout in the lawn and garden.
7. Amend and improve soils prior to planting to promote good long-term growth.
8. Prune and train trees and shrubs while small to avoid later heavy corrective pruning.
9. Hire professional arborist to prune big trees.
10. Use male trees which produce no seeds.

Weed Control

1. Develop thick healthy turf to keep weeds out.
2. Do not permit weeds to go to seed.
3. Use weed-free manure or commercial fertilizer and mulching materials.
4. Apply pre-emergent fertilizer or spray weeds along ditch banks, fence lines and waste areas.
5. Use bark, sawdust, lawn clippings or other mulches to control weeds. Apply additional fertilizer where mulches are used.
6. Cultivate or hoe weeds when small for easy control. Use a gliding hoe on small weeds.
7. Avoid using stepping stones and open joint flagstone terraces that fill up with weeds.
8. Avoid rock gardens that need hand weeding.
9. Use pavement on driveways, walks, and park-strip to eliminate weeds.
10. Use ground cover to control weeds on slopes and other areas.
11. Control morning glory (field bindweed) and other perennial weeds with chemicals. (Consult local USU extension offices.)

Tools and Equipment

1. Buy high-quality yard-care equipment and keep it in good repair.
2. Provide adequate, orderly, and dry storage space for tools and equipment
3. To avoid lifting, use a low two-wheeled hand truck to haul heavy objects.
4. Use yellow lights near people and white lights elsewhere in the garden to keep insects away from people.
5. String trimmers are fast and easy. Keep them away from trees and shrubs as they can seriously damage the bark.

Miscellaneous

1. Keep edges of walks and drives away from plants, except grass, for snow removal and traffic movement.
2. Use materials requiring minimal maintenance for fences, walls and enclosures.
3. Use a rotary tiller in vegetable and flower gardens. Spade and work soil when moist – not wet.
4. Spade in leaves and other plant residues rather than hauling them to compost pile and back again.

Site Analysis

Drainage

- Does water drain away from the house, structures and other areas? YES ___ NO ___
Is there drainage away or onto a neighbor's property? YES ___ NO ___
Are areas of your property below the surrounding property or do they show signs of erosion? YES ___ NO ___

Soil

- Is more soil needed? YES ___ NO ___
Does the soil drainage need improvement? YES ___ NO ___
Does your soil need testing? (see your USU Extension Office about a soil test kit.) YES ___ NO ___

Existing Landscape

- Do some plant need to be removed or changed? YES ___ NO ___
Does the lawn need improvement? YES ___ NO ___
Are the kinds of existing plants desirable? YES ___ NO ___
IS the general quality of each plant high enough to justify saving it? YES ___ NO ___
Are there more plants than you need? YES ___ NO ___

Natural Features

- Are there water features or rocks that you want to feature? YES ___ NO ___
Are there sunken areas that you may need to fill or grade? YES ___ NO ___
Do you have steep slopes that require retaining walls or special plantings? YES ___ NO ___
Does your neighbor's ground elevation affect your landscaping? YES ___ NO ___

Structures (shelter, patio, terrace, fences or walls)

- On a separate sheet of paper, evaluate the condition and suitability of all existing structures on your property.
Can the locations or access be improved? YES ___ NO ___
Do the locations of the structures affect plantings? YES ___ NO ___
Are any of the structures too small in relation to the lot? YES ___ NO ___
Do the construction materials blend with the surroundings? YES ___ NO ___
Do utility meters or air conditioner units require screening? YES ___ NO ___
Are more structures needed or planned? YES ___ NO ___

Walks and Drives

- Do walks or drives need relocation for greater convenience or attractiveness? YES ___ NO ___
Does either need to be wider? YES ___ NO ___
Does water drain from them? YES ___ NO ___
Can the walk be arranged in a staggered pattern for greater interest? YES ___ NO ___
Is more pavement needed in the recreational or service areas? YES ___ NO ___
Are steps or ramps needed between the different levels? YES ___ NO ___
Would modifying the walk at the entry allow for a courtyard treatment? YES ___ NO ___
Do you need off-street parking? YES ___ NO ___
Is there adequate lighting along the walks and drives? YES ___ NO ___
Do you need secondary walks or will stepping stones carry the traffic? YES ___ NO ___

Extensional Landscapes

- Do you want to change the view from or to a neighbor's property? YES ___ NO ___
Are noises from a nearby road a problem? YES ___ NO ___
Do you need more protection and privacy in any areas? YES ___ NO ___
Do you need more protection and privacy in the living or sleeping areas? YES ___ NO ___

Landscape Needs Analysis

FAMILY MEMBERS

NAME	AGE	SEX	HOBBIES
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____	_____

Maintenance time wanted: Hours per week _____

Maintenance Level: Minimum _____ Moderate _____ High _____

Family allergy considerations: _____

PUBLIC AREA

Driveway: Number of Vehicles _____ Off-street parking needed? _____
Entry Walk: Lighting _____ Utilities _____
Structure (fence, walls, decks, etc.) _____

OUTDOOR LIVING AREA

Entertaining:

Large Groups _____ Small Groups _____ Formal _____ Informal _____

Deck or patio material: _____

Seating numbers: Permanent _____ Moveable _____

Shade Required? _____ Where _____

Type: Umbrella _____ Overhead structure _____ Trellis _____ Tree _____ Canopy _____

Recreation:

Lawn Games _____ Area lighted? _____

Badminton (24' x 54') _____ Basketball (40' x 40') _____ Croquet (30' x 60') _____

Horseshoes (20' x 40') _____ Putting green (30' diameter) _____ Tether ball (20' circle) _____

Outdoor Cooking:

Permanent _____ Portable _____ Fuel type (gas, charcoal, propane) _____

Utility Connections: Water _____ Electrical _____ Gas _____ Storage Area _____

Swimming

Permanent _____ Portable _____ Size _____ Shape _____

Decks _____ Size _____ Shape _____ Material _____

Enclosure for pool _____ Fence Size _____ Material _____

Lighting _____ Dressing Facility _____ Equipment Storage _____ Legal Requirements _____ Insurance _____

SERVICE AREA

Special Interest Gardens

Vegetable garden _____ Flower beds _____ Roses _____ Herb garden _____ Containers _____

Fruit trees _____ Grape Vines _____ Greenhouse or cold frame _____ Size _____

Compost bin _____ Clothesline? _____ Permanent? _____ Portable? _____ Trash containers _____

Dog run? _____ Size _____ Doghouse _____ other pet requirements _____

Recreational Vehicle Storage

RV size _____ Boat size _____ Snowmobile/4x4 size _____ Other: _____

Lawnmower and Garden Equipment Storage

Equipment: Mower _____ Hose _____ Tiller _____ Spreader _____ Sprayer _____ Other: _____

Supplies: Fertilizer _____ Soil Amendments _____ Pesticides (separate locked cabinet) _____

Patio Furniture (itemized:) _____

Children's Play Area

Climbing ropes _____ "Junk" playground _____ Sandbox _____ Slide _____ Swings _____ Playhouse _____

Trampoline _____

Shade required _____ Trees _____ Overhead structure _____ Storage (toys, equipment, etc.) _____ Size _____

Fence _____ Height _____ Type _____ Materials _____

Surface Materials: Sand _____ Grass _____ Wood Chips _____ Small gravel _____

Garden Accessories and Features: Sculpture _____ Landscape lighting _____

Water Features: Fountain or Spray _____ Reflecting Pool _____ Fish _____ Plants _____

Bird Interests: Bird feeder _____ Bird attracting plants _____ Birdbath _____ Birdhouse _____

NEW CONSTRUCTION NEEDED

Home Addition _____ Garage _____ Added decks or patios _____ Storage Shed _____

Barns or outbuildings _____

(Locate these on your plot plan so you don't bury utilities, plant trees or pour concrete where you plan to build them.)

Planning Checklist

___1. **Draw a plan** of the lot to scale on a sheet of graph paper. Include the exact location and size of the house, garage and other buildings, including position of windows and doors, driveways, walks, and terraces. Indicate existing trees, shrubs, flower borders, property lines, good or bad views, location of septic tank and drain lines, water and sewer lines, utility lines (above and below ground) change of grade or other features.

___2. **Show relationship** of public, service and living areas to the house

___3. **Plan the public area**, keeping it as small as practical. Design plantings to complement the house.

- ___ (a.) position drives and walks keeping them short
- ___ (b.) provide an open lawn that meets the foundation at one point
- ___ (c.) position shrubs at corners and at the entrance. Use low growing species on low houses.
- ___ (d.) position trees – use small trees to frame and shade low houses. Keep large trees away from structures

___4. **Plan the service area**

- ___ (a.) keep it as small as possible and screen it from the street and living area
- ___ (b.) locate clotheslines, garbage cans, and utility needs near the kitchen and wash area
- ___ (c.) provide storage for yard maintenance equipment
- ___ (d.) provide storage for outdoor furniture, playground equipment, etc.
- ___ (e.) where there are small children, place the play area to it is visible from the kitchen
- ___ (f.) include fruit, vegetable and flower gardens if they are desired

___5. **Plan the living area**

- (a.) list needs for recreation, entertaining, hobbies and other activities of family members
- (b.) extend living area into the garden from living area of the house
- (c.) provide privacy using vines on fences, stone or block walls, shrubs, hedges, etc.
- (d.) create attractive views from windows and doors of the house
- (e.) keep lawns open for easy mowing; provide mow strips or mulches along edges
- (f.) plant ground covers on heavy slopes and other hard-to-mow areas
- (g.) select plant size by genetics for minimal pruning
- (h.) retain water and subdue weeds with mulches
- (i.) install an irrigation system to distribute water uniformly and reduce maintenance
- (j.) select healthy, pest-free plants that are well adapted to your soil and climate
- (k.) consider garden lighting for interesting nighttime effects

___6. **Consider house repair**, remodeling, paint and other needs to enhance the beauty of the setting

Order of procedure on a new home:

1. Drives
2. Walks
3. Terraces
4. Enclosures
5. Irrigation System
6. Trees
7. Lawns
8. Shrubs
9. flowers and other ornamental features